

Cameron School District

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Home of the

Comets

*The School District of Cameron
does not discriminate on the ba-
sis of race, color, national origin,
age, gender, or disability.*

March 5, 2014

Remarks concerning the Common Core State Standards and opposition to
SB619

I am Dr. Randal Braun, district administrator of the School District of Cameron, located about 50 minutes north of Eau Claire. Since 2010, 45 states and the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core State Standards. Each state made its local decision to adopt after opportunities to review drafts and voice feedback. The CCSS are rigorous, internationally-benchmarked English language arts and mathematics standards that are designed to ensure that students leave school with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and careers. The CCSS are NOT a national or state curriculum nor are they federally mandated. They were developed by a team of experts, educators and stakeholders in a process led by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Since 2010, the CCSS have garnered support from business, professional, advocacy, and policy stakeholders, and also have the support of national parent organizations.

Cameron began implementation of CCS shortly after adoption of the standards. We have spent considerable time and energy and made an investment of many thousands of dollars of taxpayer's money to do a thorough job of incorporating the Common Core into the way that we do business. Just like the major auto manufacturers have to re-design and re-tool now and then to remain competitive, so do our schools. We are once again engaged in that process; a process that promises to allow us to make great gains in the educational outcomes of our students.

Make no mistake, the Common Core is not just about what we will teach; it is mostly about how we are fundamentally changing how we teach to correspond with the research that indicates how our students best learn. No longer are we going to be covering our subjects a mile wide and an inch deep, but with the guidance and framework of the Common Core we will transform what students learn into deeply explored content that will translate into applicable skills. Skills that will allow our students to work more productively, learn more easily, and live more enriched lives.

There are those who think that somehow the Common Core is a Big Brother movement. Poppycock! Please listen to those educators, parents, and business owners who support the Common Core.

As for SB619 and its companion bill in the Assembly, I stand in opposition to those bills. It is not just Tony Evers and the DPI that stand firmly behind the Common Core Standards; virtually every superintendent, curriculum director, and principal in this state support the adoption and implementation of the Common Core Standards as an important step forward in improving education in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Association of School Boards and the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce also support the standards. In almost every district thousands of dollars and

untold amounts of time have already been invested toward implementation of CCS. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium tests that districts are due to implement next year are tied to Common Core Standards. Starting over now is bad policy, a waste of time and money, and just plain dumb. I would agree with those who feel that SB619 is a blatant power grab by those forces who are working to weaken public education; allowing legislation that could lead to legislators writing standards is comparable to calling an accountant to advise a homeowner on what kind of plumbing to install. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Randal Braun", is displayed on a light yellow rectangular background.

Randal Braun
District Administrator